

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
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EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CA, VS, MARR
SUBJ: PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION TO CONTINUED CANADIAN INVOLVEMENT IN ICCS VIETNAM

REF: STATE 46100; OTTAWA 0574

1. AT AFTER- DINNER SESSION LAST NIGHT AT RESIDENCE UK HICOM DCM WAS PRESENTED BY HOST WITH FULL OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT CASE FOR CONTINUED CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN ICCS TO OPPOSITION (PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE (PC)) LEADER STANFIELD AND CLOSE PARLIAMENTARY ADVISERS BALDWIN AND FAIRWEATHER WHO ARE MP' S ALSO ON PC FRONT BENCH. DCM REPEATED SAME STRONG ARGUMENTS USED BY UNDERSECRETARY PORTER IN HIS REPRESENTATION TO EXTAFF MIN SHARP, INCLUDING VITAL IMPORTANCE OF CANADA ON ICCS AND FIRM DETERMINATION OF USG TO MAINTAIN ITS OWN INVOLVEMENT IN SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF PEACE AGREEMENT.

2. STANFIELD MADE MAJOR RESPONSES AND SAID HIS VIEW WAS THAT PEACE DEPENDED UPON ACTIVE CONSENT OF PARTIES AND THAT ICCS WAS UNESSENTIAL INSTRUMENT. HE RECITED HISTORY OF CANADIAN FAILURES AND DISENCHANTMENTS WITH PEACE-KEEPING, JUST AS HAD SHARP TO PORTER. BALDWIN ADDED THAT CASUALTIES TO CANADIANS COULD EVEN INCREASE CURRENT PUBLIC DISTASTE FOR OPERATION. HE SAID INTEREST IN MATTER WAS NOT RPT NOT PREOCCUPYING PUBLIC ATTENTION, HOWEVER. STANFIELD STATED AWARENESS OF SUBJECT AS ONE OF CONCERN TO USG AND
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AS HAVING CLEAR REFERENCE TO US- CANADIAN RELATIONSHIP.

3. IN MY THANKING UK HICOM AT END OF EVENING FOR THIS CHANCE TO GO OVER GROUND WITH STANFIELD AND COMPANY, HE SAID HE HADPURPOSELY PROVIDED SUCH OPPORTUNITY AND THOUGHT NESSAGE GOT ACROSS.

4. THERE CAN BE NO ILLUSIONS THAT STANFIELD SHARES SAME MISGIVINGS ABOUT CONTINUED CANADIAN ICCS ROLE AS DOES SHARP. MORE IMPORTANT, AS OPPOSITION LEADER WITH SOME PROSPECT OF UNHORISING PRIME MIN TRUDEAU, HE IS PREPARED TO CRITICIZE AND OPPOSE GOVERNMENT ON ALMOST ANY ISSUE, ESPECIALLY THIS ONE OF ICCS PARTICIPATION, SINCE HE HAS CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED THAT GOVT' S FINAL DECISION SHOULD ONLY FOLLOW PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ANDVOTE. STANFIELD HAS TO DATE PRESERVED HIS OPTIONS BY CRITICIZING GOVT ON THIS PROCEDURAL GROUND ANDONLY IMPLYING, BUT NEVER STATING, THAT CANADA SHOULD NOT RPT NOT PARTICIPATE IN ICCS. OVERNEXT FEW WEEKS PC' S CAN BE EXPECTED TO CLAIM THAT THE GOC DECISION, IF FAVORABLE TO CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN ICCS, IS ILL- CONSIDERED AND THAT THE FACTS AREAT VARIANCE WITH THE PRE- CONDITIONS FORCANADIAN PARTICIPATION WHICH HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN SET BY SHARP.

5. DESPITE ABOVE ASSESSMENT, I BELIEVE STANFIELD, WERE HE IN TRUDEAU' S SHOES, WOULD BE AS LIKELY, OR MORE SO, TO DECIDE ON CONTINUED ICCS PARTICIPATION. HE IS SOMEWHAT MORE INCLINED TO ATTEND TO GOOD US- CANADIAN RELATIONS AND APPRECIATES, AS STATED ATBEGINNING, STRONG USG INTEREST IN ONGOING CANADIAN ROLE.

6. I BELIEVE THAT FORTUITOUS REPRESENTATION MADE LAST NIGHT IS BEST WE CAN MANAGE AND THAT FURTHER OR MORE DIRECT APPROACH, PARTICULARLY BY EMISSARY FROM WASHINGTON, WOULD SUPPLY TOO LITTLE MORE AND RISK BEING MISCONSTRUED BY GOC. I BELIEVEWE HAVE TO PUT OUR MONEY ON SHARP, WHO COULD WELL RESENT OURCROSSING THE AISLETO INFLUENCE OPPONENTS. SUCH ACTION COULD PERSUADE HIM WE DONOT TRUST HIS JUDGEMENT OR DISCOUNT HIS SENSE OF IMPORTANCE OF ISSUE TO USG. SINCE DECISION WILL BE TAKEN BY HIM AND CABINET COLLEAGUES ANYWAY WITHOUT PC INPUT, I SEE NO GAIN IN ANOTHER EFFORT WITH STANFIELD AND POSSIBILITY OF REAL LOSS.

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7. THIS SAMEREASONING HAS SOME RELEVANCE TO ANY POSSIBLE EFFORT WITH NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY. AS STATED IN OTTAWA 0574, WE THINK THAT ANY BRIEFING OF NDP MP ROWLAND BY OUR OFFICIALS IN SAIGON SHOULD RESULT ONLY FROM HIS INITIATIVE, NOT OURS.

8. AS SUGGESTED TO PORTER AT TIME HIS VISIT TO OTTAWA LAST WEEK, PHONE CALL FROM THE SECRETARY TO SHARP ON HIS RETURN TO OTTAWA COULD BE HELPFUL. PHONE CALL MIGHT STRESS THAT US KNOWS DEADLINE FOR GOC DECISION IS NEAR AND EXPRESS HOPE GOC CAN CONTINUE GIVE VITAL ASSISTANCE IN CONTINUING ITS ICCS PARTICIPATION. JOHNSON

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